



3010 Grand Avenue
Waukegan, IL 60085-2399
Phone: (847) 377-8000
Fax: (847) 360-3656

For Immediate Release

Date: August 18, 2003
Contact: Leslie Piotrowski
(847) 377-8055
Marcia Stanek
(847) 377-8099

Now is the Time to Immunize Your Children for School

During National Immunizations Awareness Month (August), the Lake County Health Department/Community Health Center is urging parents/guardians to make sure their children/adolescents are up to date on their immunizations in time for the 2003 school year. While the new school season begins in late August, parents have until October 15 to get their children immunized. After that date, children lacking mandatory shots are excluded from school.

Vaccinations have spared millions of people from the effects of devastating diseases. Before vaccines became widely used, infectious diseases killed thousands of children and adults each year in the United States. For example, before 1963, more than 3 million cases of measles and 500 deaths from measles were reported each year. As a result of the high level of immunization in the United States, many diseases have declined to near

-More-

zero. Due to vaccinations, smallpox has been eradicated, polio has been eliminated, and only 1 case of diphtheria, 86 cases of measles, 238 cases of rubella, and 8 cases of congenital rubella syndrome were reported in 1999.

The following vaccinations are recommended by age 2 and can be given in five visits to a doctor or public health clinic:

- 1 vaccination against measles/mumps/rubella (MMR)
- 4 vaccinations against Hib
- 3 vaccinations against polio
- 4 vaccinations against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTP)
- 3 vaccinations against hepatitis B
- 1 vaccination against varicella
- 4 vaccinations against pneumococcal

Immunizations are given at birth, and then at 2, 4, 6 and 12-18 months of age. Booster doses of diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTP), polio, and measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) are needed again between ages 4 and 6. The first measles vaccine must be given on or after the first birthday.

Scientific evidence to date, does not prove a link between vaccination and autism, sudden infant death syndrome or other problems. It is far riskier to not be vaccinated than to get the shots and have to tolerate some relatively mild, short-term discomforts.

Beginning in 1995, a vaccine became available to protect against severe cases of chicken pox. In 2002 it became a law in the state of Illinois that all children entering kindergarten

(or Head Start/daycare) must be vaccinated against chicken pox or parents must provide proof that their child had the disease prior to entry into these programs. Children now routinely receive this vaccine between the ages of 12-18 months. Those over 6 months of age, should receive an influenza shot to prevent the flu, which requires revaccination each year. If the child is under 9 years of age and this will be the first flu shot, two doses are given, one month apart.

If adolescents did not receive these shots as babies, they will need to receive them before entering school. Adolescents require doses of hepatitis B, polio vaccine, MMR, and tetanus-diphtheria (Td). Most adolescents will have had chicken pox as a child. If not, they should receive the varicella (chicken pox) vaccine. If they are over the age of 13, two doses given one month apart will be required. One additional suggestion for vaccination of adolescents is the meningococcal vaccine for the prevention of meningitis. This is an infectious disease of the lining of the brain. It has been recommended for all college bound teens. It is currently not available through the Lake County Health Department Immunization Program. It should be available through your private physician or the student health service of the college your teen attends.

The Health Department offers an infants' immunization clinic on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. at 2303 Dodge Avenue in Waukegan.

(Appointments are necessary.) It offers walk-in clinics for children Monday through

Friday from 1 to 3 p.m. at the same location. The Lake County Community Health Partnership, in conjunction with the Health Department, offers immunization clinics at 10 other Lake County sites throughout the year. Bring your child's immunization record. For more information or to make an appointment, call: (847) 377-8470.

#